

SEP -7 1918

The Anybody Family

On Sunday Morning

A

One Act Play

By

HESTER A. HOPKINS

Time of rendition 20 minutes

Tullar-Meredith
Co.

265 WEST 36th ST. NEW YORK



The Anybody Family On Sunday Morning

A One Act Play

Showing the absurdity of the hurry and confusion in many homes on
Sunday morning, leading to lateness at Church Service

By

HESTER A. HOPKINS

PRICES POSTPAID

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Cast of Characters

FATHER—Mr. Anybody **MOTHER**—Mrs. Anybody
MILLICENT—age 18 **GWENDOLEN**—age 15
ROBERT—age 12 **JANE**—age 7
WILLIE—age 5

The Anybody Family on Sunday

Morning

SCENE—The Anybodys' home. Mr. A. is seated, reading the Sunday paper, Millicent is furiously studing a Sunday School lesson, Willie is singing discordantly "O day of rest and gladness," never getting beyond the first line. Robert is in an attitude of deep dejection, coughs unnaturally now and then.

ROB. It's pretty hard to study an old lesson with your head aching like,—well, aching like—

(*Willie sings with increased vigor.*)

MILLIE. (*frantically.*) Willy, *can't* you keep quiet just for a minute? I can't hear myself think!

GWEN. (*dashing in.*) Say, Millie, would you care a lot if I wore your stockings this morning? I can't find any, and—

MILL. Well I guess I would! My new Christmas ones! You can wear plain ones.

GWEN. I can't either—not with my good shoes. My own silk ones have a big hole in the heel.

MILL. Then get to work and darn them.

GWEN. I dare say you have forgotten, but it happens to be Sunday.

(*Rob groans and coughs hollowly*)

FATHER. (*rousing up.*) Don't borrow your sister's things, Gwendolen. It's a detestable habit,—the worst one can form.

GWEN. Well, but Father, you don't want me to go to church barefoot, I suppose.

FATHER. And don't talk nonsense. (*relapses behind paper.*)

GWEN. I've *got* to have some! I've just *got* to! Millicent, *please* don't be so selfish. I'd lend you mine.

MILL. For mercy's sake, let me alone, Gwen. I've got to get my lesson.

(*Enter Mother.*)

MOTHER. (*to Father.*) Now, Will, I absolutely insist on our getting started in time this morning. It's too absurd for us to be always late to church. You know how many times we've heard the minister say that lateness disturbs the whole congregation, and destroys the spirit of worship.

FATHER. (*impatiently.*) The question is simply this:—is the day to be a peaceful, restful, quiet time in the *home*,—in the home, I say, or is it to be a day of rush, distraction, and trouble in order to get ready for church?

MOTHER. Please don't argue now, Will. Children, it's time to get ready! Come, Millicent, you can leave that now.

GWEN. Mother, I've got to have some stockings.

MOTHER. I saw a good pair of yours on the chair in the sewing room. (*exit Gwen.*) Come, Millie, stop studying that.

MILL. I don't understand what this lesson is about myself, so I don't see how I can be expected to teach it.

MOTHER. You'll have to leave it now.

MILL. Well, just tell me, Mother, who on earth was Joab? It just says, "And Joab—," wait a minute till I find the place.

MOTHER. Your father can tell you later. Do start getting ready.

MILL. Yes, but I've got to know now.

GWEN. (*shouting from the next room.*) He was the king!

MILL. Well, he was *not!* I know that much myself. David was the king.

GWEN. (*entering, shoe in hand.*) We had that lesson in our class a while ago. He was the king *after* David, and his wife was the one the dogs ate up.

MOTHER. Never mind it, Gwen. Just get ready. Run along, Willie.

MILL. Father, which was it?

FATHER. Come, come, don't do your lessons now. Look it up in the Bible.

(*Millicent begins hunting frantically in Bible.*)

ROB. He was the boy king that got crowned in the—

GWEN. Oh, go on. You don't know anything about it.
(*Exit Gwen.*)

MOTHER. (*desperately.*) Leave it, Millie! Will, drop your paper! I insist that you get ready. (*Exit Mill.*)

FATHER. Do you think I'd better go to church?

MOTHER. I certainly do!

FATHER. I've been feeling rather rheumatic lately.

(*Rob coughs unnaturally.*)

MOTHER. Are you all dressed, Rob?

ROB. (*coughing.*) No, Mother.

MOTHER. Why not? What's the matter?

(*Gwen. dashes in one door and out the other, stockings in hand.*)

ROB. I feel kind of queer.

MOTHER. Have you caught cold?

ROB. I—I guess so. (*coughs.*)

MOTHER. You don't feel sick, do you, dear?

ROB. I feel kind of—kind of—queer. I guess perhaps I've got a fever or something.

FATHER. (*rousing.*) Very well, young man, very well. If you're too sick for church, you're too sick for dinner with us this noon. Bed is the place for you. That's the way to cure fever—right into bed with you.

ROB. Aw, Father, I do honest feel queer.

FATHER. Sick enough for bed, eh?

ROB. Well, what have I got to go to bed for? I got a little cough, and I should think—

MILL. (*rushing through.*) Gwen! That girl's got my stockings, Mother! Gwen! (*exit by other door.*)

FATHER. (*sternly.*) Which is it? Bed or church?

ROB. Well, I can't go to church without my collection, can I?

MOTHER. Please, *please* hurry, both of you. It's nearly ten.

GWEN. (*entering with Mill.*) Mother! Make Millicent give those back. She says they're her stockings, and I found them just where you said.

MILL. I never heard such nonsense. Of course, they're mine.

GWEN. Millie, they are not, I—

(*Exeunt together, arguing.*)

FATHER. (*getting up with great energy.*) Come, Bob, no loitering!

ROB. They don't want you unless you've got your collection.

FATHER. I gave you for three Sundays in advance, last week

ROB. Oh no, Father, that was two weeks ago,—or I guess three weeks.

MOTHER. Do give it to him, Will, and we can straighten it out later.

FATHER. (*going through pockets.*) I haven't any change. Now let this be a lesson to you, Rob! There! Wait—here's a quarter. Put it in one side of the envelope and let them do what they can with it at the treasurer's office. Everyone seems to think me a mint.

MOTHER. (*shooing them out.*) Now all be quick in dressing, or we'll be late again.

(*Exeunt together, as Jane enters from the other side.*)

JANE. Mother! Mother! It's ten o'clock. (*Jane is fully dressed, and stands Bible in hand.*)

VOICE OF MOTHER. Yes, Jane, you'll have to wait a little. Take your coat off.

(*Jane stands patiently.*)

VOICE OF GWEN. Mother! Where did you say my gloves were?

VOICE OF MILL. Mother, are you going to let that child

take *all* my things? (enter Mill.) Mother, can you hear? Gwen. has taken—

VOICE OF GWEN. Oh, all right, you can have your belt back again. I've found mine.

MILL. (departing.) You might just as well sit down, Jane—we shan't go for ages yet. (Exit.)

VOICE OF FATHER. (much annoyed.) Robert! Have you taken my collar buttons?

VOICE OF MOTHER. What is it, Will? Can I do anything?

VOICE OF FATHER. No, you can *not*! Unless you can *make* that boy let my things alone. It's outrageous. Rob, what have you done with it?

VOICE OF ROB. I never touched it, now honest I didn't.

JANE. Mother!

VOICE OF FATHER. Then who did take it? It's gone, I tell you! Mary, this is unendurable. I have nothing left but this confounded crow bar that tears my shirts to shreds. Rob!

JANE. Mother!

VOICE OF ROB. I don't know anything about it.

JANE. Mother! Mother! It's five minutes past ten!

VOICE OF MOTHER. Please don't trouble us now, Jane!

JANE. (agitatedly.) I've got to be there on time.

MILL. (entering.) Did I leave my money in here, Mother? Help me look, Jane. (she hunts about.) Father, did you pay me this week?

VOICE OF FATHER. (frantic.) There! There it goes! I knew it would! Broken! Broken! Now what shall I do!

MILL. Mother, my money's gone!--Oh no, here it is in my Bible.

(Exit running; as she leaves, Gwen. enters in equal haste.)

GWEN. Mother, I've got to have three pins.

(Enters Mother's room, then runs back across, and exit.)

JANE. Mother!

VOICE OF MOTHER. Oh Will, don't get so excited! Just sit still, and perhaps I can fix it for you.

VOICE OF FATHER. Fix it! How can you fix it, when the thing's *broken*?

JANE. Can I go on, Mother?

VOICE OF ROB. Say, Gwen, have you been taking my handkerchiefs?

VOICE OF GWEN. That's likely, isn't it?

VOICE OF ROB. Somebody has.

JANE. Mother, I'm going to start. You've *got* to be on time for the Church League. Mother, I'm going.

VOICE OF FATHER. Robert, if you ever so much as touch one of my things again!

ROB. I never did!

JANE. Is it all right? Mother, I'm going. (*exit Jane.*)

VOICE OF MILL. I know one thing. I'm going to get a key and keep my bureau drawers locked after this. Then maybe I can keep a few of my things.

VOICE OF GWEN. Is that meant for me, dear sister?

VOICE OF MILL. Seems possible, doesn't it?

(*Enter Gwen.*)

GWEN. If you kept a little order it would work even better.—Well, I'm all ready. Ready and waiting. (*She hurriedly gets into coat and gloves.*)

(*Enter Willie, looking depressed.*)

WILLIE. This old collar scratches me. Fix it, Gwen.

GWEN. (with dignity.) And what do you say, Willie?

WILLIE. Please.

(*Gwen fixes the collar. Enter Mother.*)

MOTHER. Had I better start on, Will? Start on with Willie and Jane?

GWEN. I'll start along with you.

VOICE OF FATHER. Wait, Mary. I like the whole family to arrive together. It looks better.

MOTHER. Rob, aren't you ready? Where's Jane?

GWEN. She wasn't here when I came.

(Enter *Millicent*.)

MILL. Why aren't we starting? Isn't everybody ready?

(Enter *Father*.)

FATHER. Come, Robert, we can't wait like this for you.

MOTHER. (calling.) Come, Jane, we're ready to go! Jane!

MILL. Hurry, Jane!

MOTHER. What on earth can have happened to her?

Jane!—Go look for her, Gwen! Jane!

(The family variously shout "Jane" at different doors.)

(Enter *Rob*.)

ROB. Oh, Jane left about an hour ago.

FATHER. Why didn't you tell us?

MOTHER. Did you see her go?

ROB. No, but I heard her say she was going.

FATHER. And you let us spend all this time hunting and calling!

ROB. (plaintively.) Well, why don't we start now?

(The family starts.

GWEN. (suddenly.) Oh mercy, Father! Wait a moment. I've forgotten my collection. (Starts back.)

FATHER. (sternly.) Too late now, Gwendolen! We can't wait for you.

GWEN. But I've got to have it.

MOTHER. (pausing.) Now wait a minute, all of you, while I say something. This is the *last time* that we will have such a Sunday morning as this. It's never too late in the year for good resolutions, and I want us to make them now. Sunday would certainly be a great deal more restful for you, Father, and for all of us if it were more orderly. When my grandmother was a girl, they always began the Sabbath rest at sundown Saturday night, and I think it would be a good plan if we at least began to

get ready for Sunday the day before. I wish you wouldn't buy those wretched Sunday papers any more. Gwen, I want *you* to see that your clothes are all in order before you go to bed Saturday night—and Robert, if you are going to have a headache every Sunday, you will have to spend Saturday afternoon quietly in the house. This very day, Millicent, you must begin to study your lesson for next Sunday. And now I'll begin to do my part by not delaying you any longer, but starting right along.

ROB. Oh say, go on without me. I promised Ben Jones I'd bring him something. (*He starts off.*)

FATHER. No, Robert, march on out. I'm going to get this family started *now!*

(*They all go out.*)

VOICE OF FATHER. Er—wait a moment, Mary,—or walk on slowly. I seem to have left my envelope behind!

(*Enter Father, and in the midst of his furious and destructive search, the curtain falls.*)



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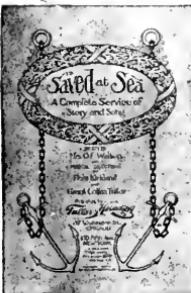
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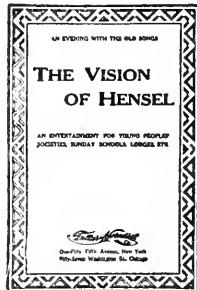
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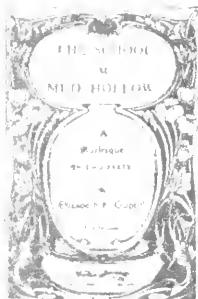
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